Remarks

In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejection set forth in the Office Action dated February 8, 2008 are respectfully requested.

Initially, Applicants wish to thank Examiner Wong for the courtesy call informing Applicants' representative that the portion of the Office Action stating that the action was final on page 6 of Action was in error. Applicants also wish to thank Examiner Wong for his recommendations to place the case in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-3 and 29-31 are now pending, of which Claim 1 is the sole independent claim. Claims 1 and 3 have been amended. Claims 29-31 have been added. Support for the claim changes and new claims can be found in the original disclosure. Therefore, no new matter has been added.

Claim 1 was objected to as the Examiner found the portion "a counting portion adapted to count the number of image formations executed after a last automatic adjustment" unclear. In response, Applicants have amended Claim 1 to recite that the counting portion is adapted to count the number of image formations executed after a last automatic adjustment *for each of the plurality of adjustment items*. Therefore, Applicants submit that this objection has been obviated and request withdrawal of the objection.

Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,122,461 (*Shinohara*) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,950,036 (*Konishi*). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Shinohara teaches an image forming apparatus and control method with density control means. According the Office Action, *Shinohara* is deficient in that it does not teach

adjustment of a plurality of adjustment items. To compensate for the deficiency, the Office Action relies on the teachings of *Konishi*. Applicants respectfully submit, however, that *Konishi* does not remedy this deficiency. The Office Action relies on column 6, lines 45-55 of the *Konishi* to teach a plurality of adjustment items. However, that section merely discusses various elements associated with density adjustment, *e.g.*, γ correction, and not a plurality of adjustment items. Accordingly, *Konishi,* like *Shinohara*, only teaches density adjustment, and, therefore, also fails to teach or suggest a plurality of adjustment items, among other features.

Furthermore, Applicants have amended Claim 1 to further clarify that the counting portion is adapted to count the number of image formations executed after a last automatic adjustment for *each* of a plurality of adjustment items, further distinguishing this claim from the cited patents. New Claims 29-31 have been added to further define the plurality of adjustment items as suggested by the Examiner.

Accordingly, *Shinohara* and *Konishi*, whether taken individually or in combination, fail to teach or suggest salient features recited in independent Claim 1, and, therefore, Applicants request withdrawal of the rejection set forth in the outstanding Office Action. Dependent Claims 2, 3, 29-31 are also submitted to be patentable by virtue of their dependencies on an allowable claim, as well as for the additional features they recite. Individual consideration of these claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that the present invention, as defined by Claims 1-3 and 29-31, is patentable over the cited art of record and that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the objection and rejection set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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